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Users will soon be able to access reports

COURTNEY BRUMMER, Staff Writer

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The Council Bluffs Police Department has made it easier for citizens to access traffic accident reports.

Beginning May 1, Internet users can access accident reports on the Council Bluffs Police Department's Web site: www.cbpolice.org.

Sgt. Pat Norris, who is in charge of the department's site, said the motivation for the addition was to make it more convenient for the public and for insurance companies to access accident reports they need.

"Say a citizen from another state gets into a car accident here," he said.

"They can't get access to a report right away because an officer may need to investigate more, and there's a chain of command the report goes through before it's finalized.

"That person from out of state may not have time to wait for it; and a lot of times, insurance companies will tell them they have to provide the accident report. It creates quite a hassle."

Any reports taken by city officers are scanned digitally into the department's computer system, Norris said.

On the site, a citizen looking for a report can do a search on the provided site link by the date of the accident, the report number, the name of the party involved or the location.

Even lacking any of that information, a citizen can still find the report just by searching through the reports listed.

Almost two weeks ago, the department asked the City Council to raise the cost of copies for accident reports to \$10 each. They previously cost \$5 per copy. The council approved the motion.

The online reports would also cost \$10, a fee Norris said can be paid by using a credit card online. Companies that would need to pull reports frequently will be able to set up an account on the site.

By accessing the accident reports online, citizens can save the time needed to come down to the police department during business hours and paying with cash or check, Norris said.



"Disco"





"If I'm a citizen and I get into an accident, I want to know that I can get the information I need from the comfort of my home with a credit card rather than have to find time to come all the way down to the department during business hours and pay with cash or check."

Norris said as much as the technology can help residents, it could be awhile before they determine if other incident reports will ever be accessible online.


"We want the site to be very user friendly," he said. "But that's something we'll have to wait and see about."



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